

NIO # 1713-74

Office of the Director  
of Central Intelligence

Executive Registry

74-2474

6 August 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director

SUBJECT : The Roles of Costa Gomes  
and Spinola in the  
Portuguese Coup

The attached description of the roles of Spinola and Costa Gomes is now public property, but it is worth reading as a plausible and certainly the clearest statement on this question by one in a position to know.



NIO/WE

cc: DDCI  
D/DCI/NIO

*Removed  
fr. DCI desk  
by EA/DCI*

*8/23  
[Signature]*

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 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 0165  
 INFO RUFHRS/USINT ALGIERS 065  
 RUQMAB/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 119  
 RUTAIJ/AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN 082  
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 RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 171  
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 RUDKSNQ/AMEMBASSY OSLO 253  
 RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1500  
 RUEHPC/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 355  
 ZEN/AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA 488  
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 RUDKFMQ/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM 166  
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 RUFHAU/AMEMBASSY VIENNA 250  
 RUEHNA/USMISSION NATO 659  
 RUEHDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 541  
 RUCBSAA/CINCLANT  
 RUSNAAA/USCINCEUR  
 RUEKJCS/DIA  
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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PO

SUBJ: OTELO CARVALHO TELLS PRESS OF ROLE OF GENERALS  
COSTA GOMES AND SPINOLA IN APRIL 25 COUP

REF: LISBON 3273

SUMMARY: THERE FOLLOWS AN ACCOUNT BY BRIG. OTELO CARVALHO,  
CHIEF PLANNER OF APRIL 25 COUP, OF ROLE PLAYED BY  
GENERALS SPINOLA AND COSTA GOMES IN EVENTS LEADING UP  
TO COUP AND IN DRAFTING OF MOVEMENT PROGRAM. END  
SUMMARY.

1. CARVALHO CLAIMS THAT BOTH GENERALS COSTA GOMES AND SPINOLA "WERE, FOR LONG TIME (BEFORE COUP), 'INVOLVED' IN MOVEMENT. MOREOVER THESE CONTACTS ALREADY EXISTED IN PAST YEAR." COSTA GOMES ALLEGEDLY FIRST GENERAL ON ACTIVE DUTY TO SUPPORT TOTALLY THE MOVEMENT, WHICH IS WHY "HE IS EXTRAORDINARILY RESPECTED BY ALL OF US." HE WAS FIRST (WHILE ARMED FORCES' CHIEF OF STAFF) TO TELL HIS SUPERIORS (INCLUDING CAETANO) THAT HE AGREED ENTIRELY WITH MOVEMENT'S PURPOSE (COMMENT: PRESUMABLY DURING INITIAL NON-POLITICAL PHASE). MOVEMENT CONTACTED COSTA GOMES "A LOT" IN 1973 AND HE SUPPOSEDLY PLACED HIMSELF ON THEIR SIDE. GENERAL SPINOLA, WHO ON LEAVE UNTIL JANUARY, "ALSO OPPOSED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CAETANO AND ALSO TOLD US HE (SPINOLA) ON OUR SIDE." CARVALHO TOLD INTERVIEWER THAT "THESE TWO WERE GENERALS WITH WHOM WE ALWAYS IN CONTACT SINCE MOVEMENT'S BEGINNING, WHO WERE ON OUR SIDE, AND WHO AIDED US GRATLY."

2. IN JANUARY GENERAL SPINOLA BECAME VICE-CHIEF OF STAFF OF ARMED FORCES. CARVALHO CLAIMS THEREAFTER HE AND CAPT. LOURENCO WERE MOVEMENT INTERMEDIARIES WITH SPINOLA, WITH WHOM THEY HAD MANY CONTACTS. "WE DISCUSSED THE 'SUBJECT' A LOT, HE GAVE US MUCH ADVICE, ESPECIALLY REGARDING 'WAYS TO ACT,' WHEN DECISION MADE TO GO AHEAD WITH A COUP. "HE WAS WITH US" ("FICOU A PAR"). CARVALHO MAINTAINED CONTACT WITH SPINOLA (WHO WITHOUT A JOB AT TIME) VIA INTERMEDIARY WHO A FRIEND OF SPINOLA AND IN DAILY TOUCH WITH HIM AT HOME. CARVALHO HIMSELF, FEARFUL OF DGS VIGILANCE, DID NOT DIRECTLY CONTACT SPINOLA AFTER CALDAS. SOMETIME AFTER CALDAS EPISODE CARVALHO TOLD SPINOLA

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COUP PREPARATIONS UNDERWAY, AND DATES APRIL 22-29  
GIVEN HIM AS PROBABLY DATES OF ACTION.

3. AROUND TIME SPINOLA TOLD OF COUP PLANS THE MOVEMENT  
CREATED ITS POLITICAL COMMITTEE, WHICH WAS GIVEN  
JOB DRAFTING MFA PROGRAM. PRESIDENT OF DRAFTING  
COMMITTEE WAS COL. VASCO GONCALVES (NOW PRIME MINISTER).  
OTHERS ON COMMITTEE WERE MAJOR VITOR ALVES (ON COUNCIL  
OF STATE); LT. COL. CHARIAR (ON COUNCIL OF STATE);  
LT. COL. BRAS (MINISTER OF INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION);  
AND MAJOR MELO ANTUNES (NOW MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO AND  
MAN WHO WROTE MOST OF PROGRAM AS IT TURNED OUT).  
CARVALHO WAS INTERMEDIARY BETWEEN PROGRAM DRAFTING GROUP  
AND GENERAL SPINOLA. COL. VASCO GONCALVES MAINTAINED  
LIAISON WITH COSTA GOMES, AND SHOWED HIM COPIES OF  
DRAFT PROGRAM.

4. GENERAL SPINOLA ALLEGEDLY MADE SOME CHANGES IN  
PROGRAM DRAFTS AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH GEN. COSTA GOMES.  
A NUMBER OF REVISIONS AND SUGGESTIONS WERE MADE BY THE TWO  
GENERALS ON ONE HAND, AND BY PROGRAM COMMITTEE ON OTHER  
BEFORE FINAL DOCUMENT AGREED UPON ON EVE OF REVOLT. A  
FINAL VERSION OF PROGRAM GIVEN TO SPINOLA THROUGH  
INTERMEDIARY AT 2100 APRIL 24, AT WHICH TIME SPINOLA  
INFORMED COUP ABOUT TO START. CARVALHO MADE CLEAR  
THAT NO ONE OUTSIDE OF "CAPTAINS GROUP" HAD A HAND IN  
EXECUTION OF COUP: NEITHER COSTA GOMES, GEN. SPINOLA,  
AND CERTAINLY NOT (AS SOMETIMES ALLEGED) NATO OR  
VATICAN.

5. SPINOLA'S BOOK "PORTUGAL AND THE FUTURE" HAD NO  
INFLUENCE OF ANY SORT ON DEVELOPMENT OF MFA, WHICH WAS  
ALREADY UNDERWAY WHEN BOOK CAME OUT. CARVALHO SAYS HE  
WAS PERSONALLY UPSET WHEN LEARNING THAT BOOK WOULD  
BE PUBLISHED BECAUSE HE BELIEVED OBSERVERS WOULD WRONGLY  
ATTRIBUTE ORIGINS OF MOVEMENT TO PUBLICATION OF BOOK.

6. COMMENT: CARVALHO THROUGHOUT INTERVIEW WAS CAREFUL TO  
SEPARATE SUPPORT GIVEN BY GENERALS SPINOLA AND COSTA  
GOMES TO PROFESSIONAL DEMANDS OF CAPTAINS IN 1973  
(MILITARY PHASE) FROM THE SUPPORT THEY GAVE MOVEMENT AT  
LATER STAGE. IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT WHILE TWO GENERALS  
WERE ON CAPTAINS' "SIDE" REGARDING MILITARY-RELATED  
COMPLAINTS, THEY NOT IN ON PLOTTING OUT SUBSEQUENT COUP.

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THEY WERE INFORMED OF PLANS, GAVE UNSPECIFIED ADVICE,  
AND APPARENTLY EXPRESSED SYMPATHY FOR PLOTTERS, BUT DID  
NOT "INTERFERE" WITH ACTUAL PLANNING AND EXECUTION OF EVENTS  
OF APRIL 25, WHICH WAS ENTIRELY CAPTAINS' SHOW. UNTIL  
OFFICIAL VERSION OF COUP PUBLISHED IN FUTURE (AS WE  
UNDERSTAND IT WILL BE ) CARVALHO'S ACCOUNT STANDS  
AS ONLY COHERENT, AUTHORITATIVE VERSION OF ORIGINS  
ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT AND ROLES OF MAJOR FIGURES  
IN IT. POST

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